

How is purpose in life experienced when the road ahead is shorter than the road behind?

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INTRODUCTION & AIM

Healthy ageing is a multidimensional process (integrates autonomy, participation and well-being across the life course)(Paoli, 2025)

Purpose in life is a key component of person-centered care in later life, as it aligns care with older adults' own goals and values (Owen, 2021)

However, there remains a gap between scientific models of healthy ageing and older adults' lived experiences of purpose and meaningful everyday activities and the presence of ageism in society and internalized ageism (Levy & Apriceno, 2009)

Within the **UN Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021–2030)**, which seeks to improve the lives of older people and their communities worldwide understanding purpose is essential (Who, 2025)

Research Aim

Understand

How do older adults conceptualize their sense of purpose?

Maintain

What strengths and strategies sustain purposeful living?

Renegotiate

How is purpose reshaped in response to life's transitions?

METHOD

Design

Qualitative study using reflexive thematic analysis to capture rich and nuanced lived experiences.

Participants

Community-dwelling adults aged **65 and older**, representing diverse life trajectories and backgrounds.

Data Collection

60–90 minute semi-structured in-depth interviews covering achievements, coping, strengths, barriers, and legacy.

Analysis

Reflexive thematic analysis via **MAXQDA**; hybrid coding (a priori + emergent themes).

The a priori coding tree addressed core constructs — **purpose, barriers, ageism, strengths, coping, and legacy** — while remaining systematically open to emergent patterns arising from participants' own narratives.



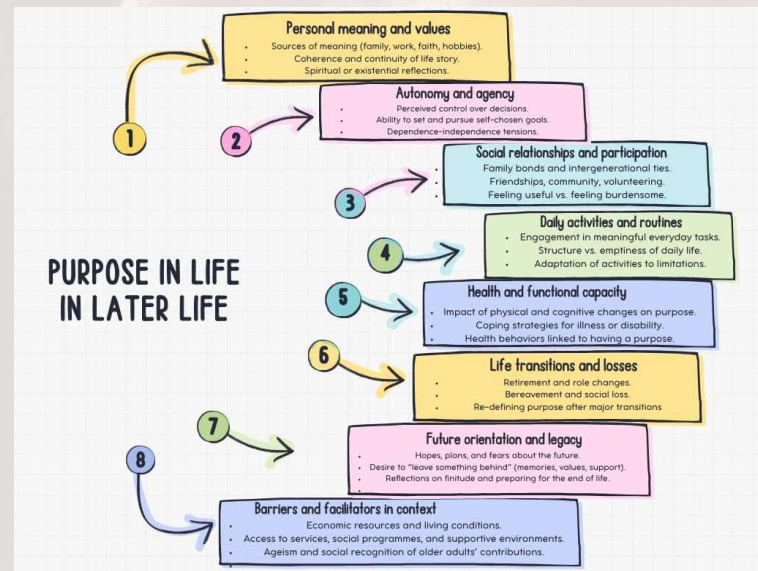
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RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Preliminary findings reveal that older adults draw upon **biographical milestones and personal strengths** when articulating purpose.

They describe both long-standing and evolving forms of meaning — alongside internal and external challenges — while **legacy** consistently emerges as a bridge between past achievements and future-oriented direction.



CONCLUSIONS

Strengths & Resilience

Personal strengths and resilience sustain purpose, shaping past reflection and current challenges.

Legacy as Meaning

Legacy connects past experience to future contribution.

Alignment with Healthy Ageing

Findings align with healthy ageing and validate person-centered care reflecting older adults' meanings.

FUTURE WORK

Intervention Applications

Explore value-based interventions (e.g., **LIFEVERBS**) grounded in these qualitative findings.

Assessment Tools

Develop practical instruments for measuring and supporting purpose in clinical and community settings.

Ageism & Purpose

Examine the specific role of internalized ageism in disrupting purposeful living across subgroups.

Title

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INTRODUCTION & AIM

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FUTURE WORK / REFERENCES

